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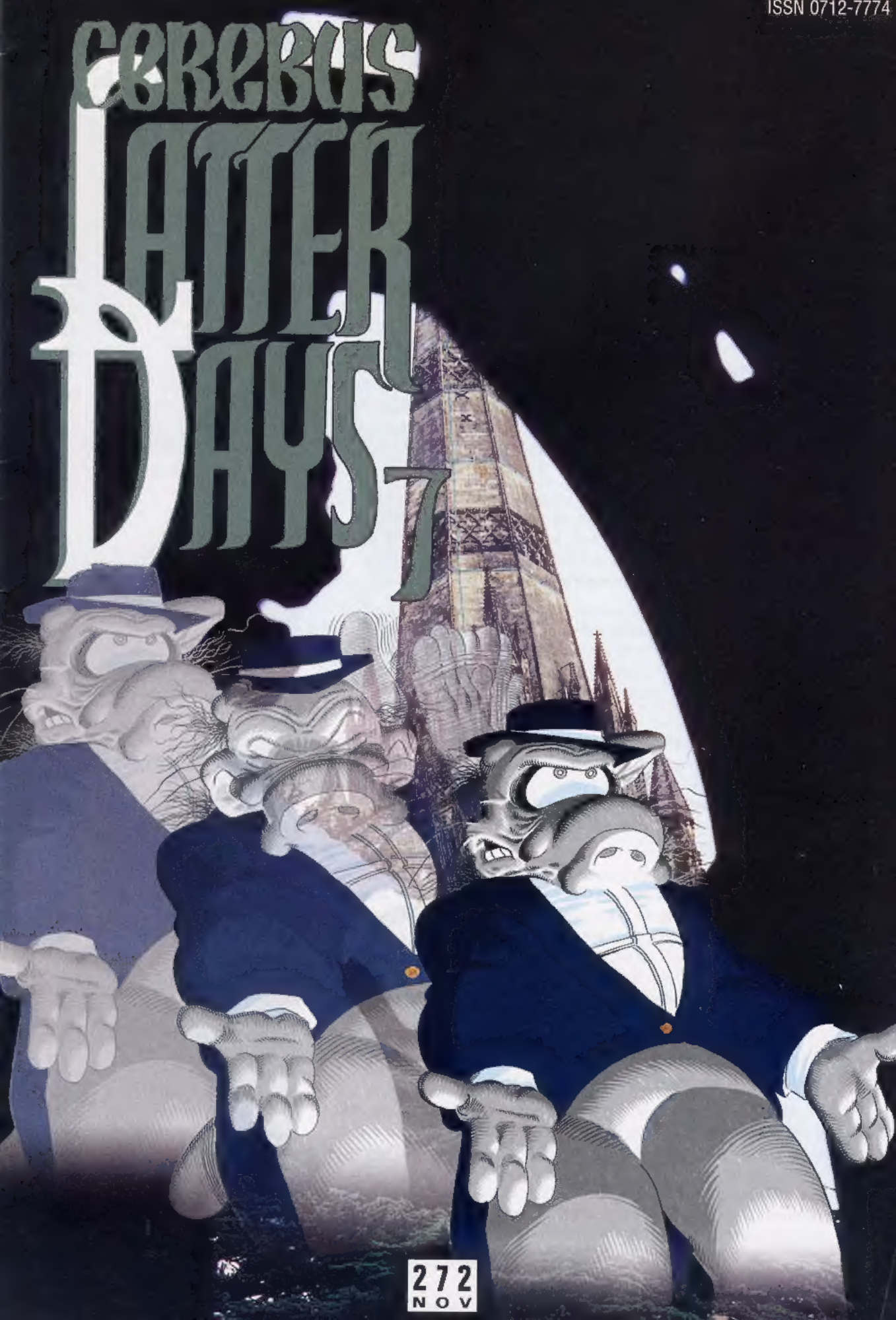
CEREBUS

LATTER DAYS

7



272
NOV

(The following instalment of "Aardvark Comment" was originally scheduled for Cerebus 271)

Dear Dave,

I thought you might be interested to hear the enclosed tape. It's this morning's episode of a BBC Radio 4 series called "On The Ropes". Each week, a BBC interviewer named John Humphrys talks to someone who has survived tough times. In this particular episode, the subject is Neil Lyndon, a British freelance journalist. In 1990, Lyndon wrote a (London) *Sunday Times* feature attacking feminism. Two years later, he followed it up with a controversial book on the same subject.

There was an immediate backlash when the book was published. Lyndon claims this reaction was responsible for editors suddenly refusing to employ him, the bankruptcy which followed, the break up of his marriage and him losing contact with his son. I think the key moment in the interview comes when Lyndon discusses how people who objected to the book refused to engage him in rational argument. Here, without Humphrys' occasional interruptions, is what he has to say:

> *"That was one of the really curious features of the whole thing – I couldn't actually get an argument. What I really wanted was an argument. I really wanted to say 'This is what I think. Here it is, is there anything wrong with it? Tell me where it's wrong – I really want to know.'"*
>
> *"I would be at parties with people that I knew very well, quite well-known, distinguished authors and that kind of thing, and women, and they'd say 'Well, let's not talk about it now.' 'No, no, no. I think I'll get too heated.' 'No, no, let's have it out.' 'I'll write to you,' they'd say – and never write..."*
>
> *"I think what explains it is that feminism as a body is partly scholarship, partly credo, partly superstition, partly belief – it's very much like a faith. . . I do think it's a contemporary faith, and I think I'd put myself in the position not just of being a dissident, but of being a heretic. . . And, indeed, there were signs of that."*
>
> *"I remember a boy coming to interview me for the student paper in Cambridge – a very, very nice boy – and he told me he'd been telling his tutor in his seminar that he was coming to see me, and his tutor had said 'Well, put a bullet in him for me, would you?' At the Cambridge Union, where I spoke, the President of the Cambridge Union at the end of the debate, recommended to people in the chamber that they burn my book. . . in the end, that was the way I viewed it – that I had expressed something that was heretical, and that (it) therefore was not up for consideration, and not up for argument or debate, but actually had to be expunged."*

On a similar note, I was pleased to see you taking Seth to task in 268 for complaining that he had been "offended" by your earlier essay. Contrary to what many well-meaning people would have us believe, the freedom to (non-violently) offend your fellow citizens is a crucial part of the robust debate which every free society needs. Attempting to pre-empt any such debate in the way Lyndon describes above is essentially totalitarian in nature. The fact that peo-

Continued in back...

CEREBUS
NO. 272 NOVEMBER 2001

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LATTER DAYS
•
PROLOGUE
(Cerebus 266
and 267)
•
BOOK ONE
(Cerebus 268 to
288)
•
BOOK TWO
(Cerebus 289 to
300)

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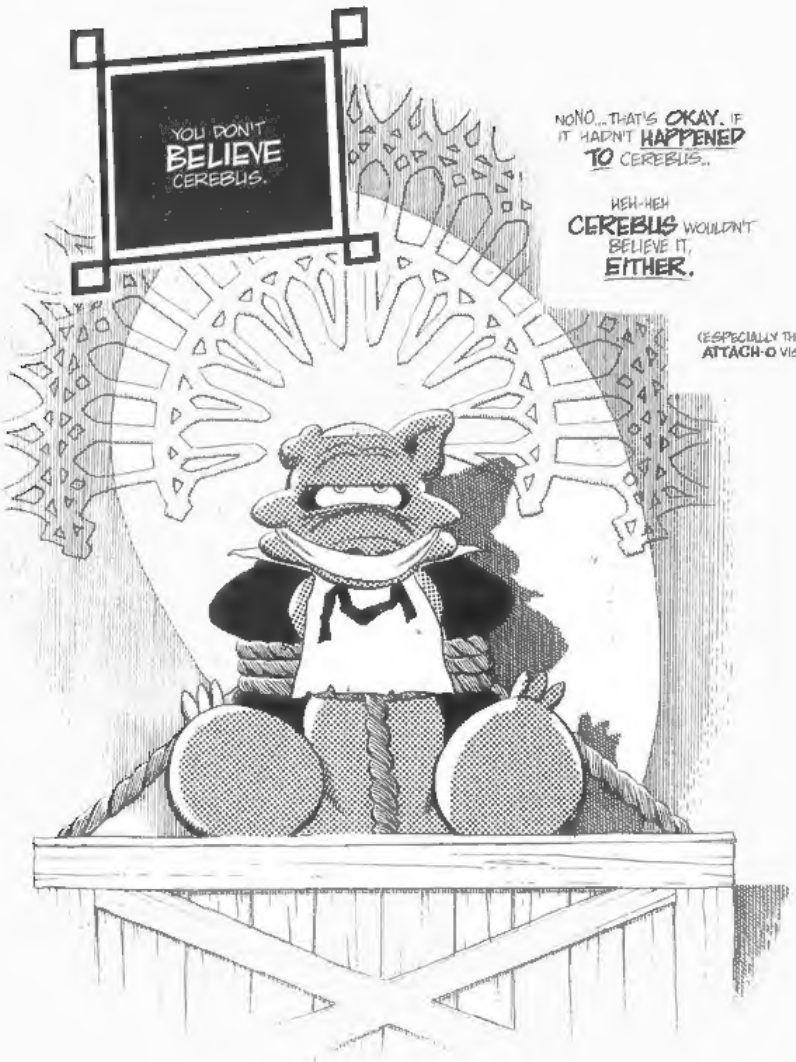
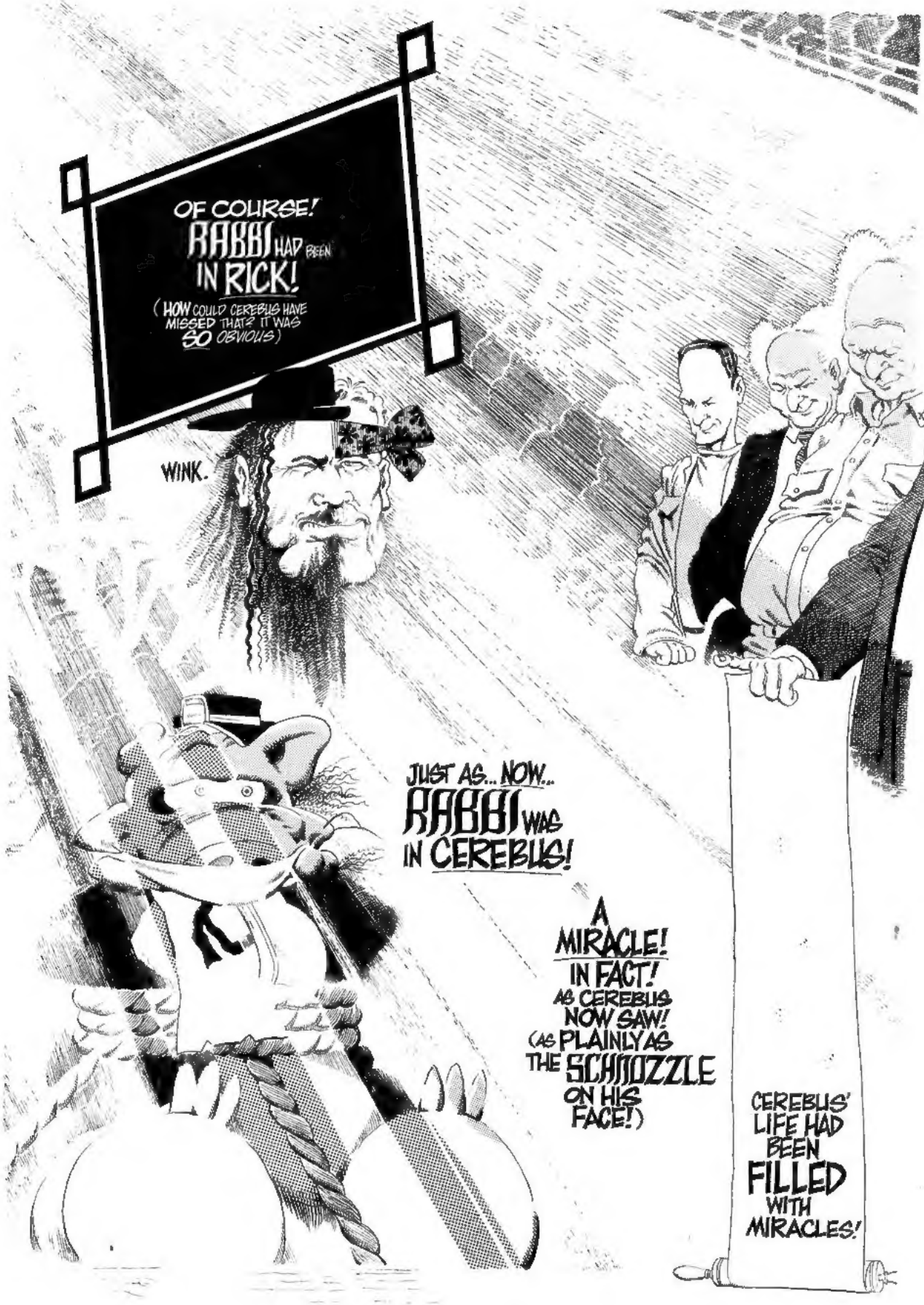

YOU DON'T BELIEVE CEREBUS.
NONO... THAT'S OKAY. IF IT HADN'T HAPPENED TO CEREBUS..
HEH-HEH CEREBUS WOULDN'T BELIEVE IT, EITHER.
(ESPECIALLY THE "ROPE-O ATTACH-O VISION" PART)

BUT IT DID HAPPEN-- BY SOME MIRACLE ...

NOW!

NOW! CEREBUS UNDERSTOOD EVERYTHING!
EVERYTHING!
RABBI'S "OATH OF POWER"
(WHICH HAD BEEN GIVEN TO HIM) (YOU MAY RECALL) (BY THE BEN-GURIONS OF THE GALAXY):
(WHEN HE WAS JUST A LITTLE RABBI)
"IN DARKEST NIGHT, IN BRIGHTEST DAY, NO EVIL SHALL STAND IN HIS WAY! LET THOSE WHO WILL NOT EVIL SHUN BEWARE HIS POWER OUR GUD IS ONE!"
AND HOW IT WAS THE SAME AS RICK 12:10:
10• Hee is one God, indivisible, having one Name and one Face •and one Aspect which is God.•

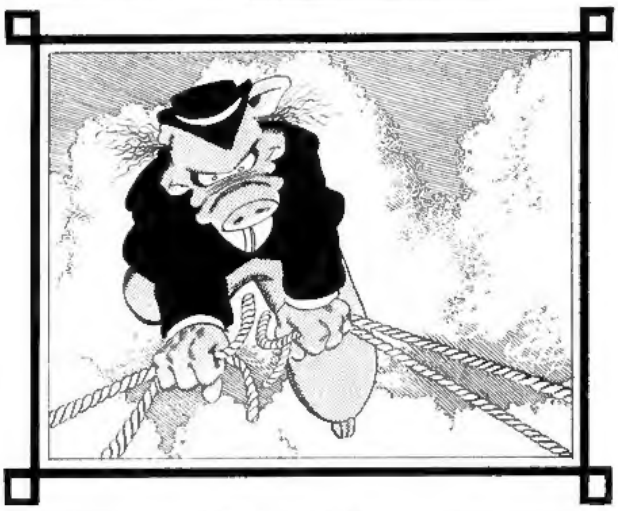

OF COURSE! RABBI HAD BEEN IN RICK!
(HOW COULD CEREBUS HAVE MISSED THAT? IT WAS SO OBVIOUS)
WINK.
JUST AS... NOW... RABBI WAS IN CEREBUS!
A MIRACLE! IN FACT! AS CEREBUS NOW SAW! (AS PLAINLY AS THE SCHMOZZLE ON HIS FACE!)
CEREBUS' LIFE HAD BEEN FILLED WITH MIRACLES!

THE BIG-ROUND-GLOWING-WHITE-STRANGE-THING.
THE GOLD COIN MINTED BY TARIM.
CEREBUS' ASCENSIONS.
THE REGENCY ELF.
ALL OF THOSE THINGS THAT CEREBUS USED TO FIND (WELL... FRANKLY) EMBARRASSING
(WHY DON'T OTHER PEOPLE...
APHL
...SNEEZE FIRE FOR NO REASON?)

ALL... MIRACLES.
MIRACLES FROM GOD.
...WHICH IS RIGH OLEWAYS TRUE WHEN DA WOID UNTO THEE
OLE DA OITH BEIN' EN AGAINS' DA DAY HALL RETOYN NGET MORE
AND NOW-- THE GREATEST MIRACLE OF ALL:
A/ EN.
THAT RABBI IS CEREBUS' SECRET IDOLATRY!
SHLP SHLEP SHLEP SHLEP
T THOU NOW SPEAK UNTO OYMINS DA WOID OF WHICH WAS PROMISED OF THE PROPHET RICK?
EH? THE "WORD OF TRUTH"? CHUCKLE. CHILD'S PLAY FOR RABBI!
AYE!
WHADDEE SAY?
HE SAID "AYE!"
AYE!
THIS IS IT!
MEMORIZETH IT AS SOON AS HE DOTH SPEAK IT UNTO US!
WOOP! WOOP! WOOP! WOOP! WOOP!
"CHAPTER FOURTEEN, VERSE ONE..."
"...AND CEREBUS SPAKE UNTO THE THREE WISE FELLOWS..."
"...SAYING UNTO THEM..."

"THIS!"...
"...LOOKEST LIKE UNTO A JOB FOR"...
RABBI!
CEREBUS TRIED EXPLAINING TO THEM RABBI'S FOOLPROOF PLAN:
AND THEN?
WHEN ALL THE CIRINISTS ARE STANDING ON THE FISHNET?
THAT RABBI WILL WEAVE AT RABBI-SPEED? (FOUR MILES AROUND?) OUT OF SOLID IRON STRANDS? THAT RABBI WILL HAVE COMPRESSED USING HIS MIGHTY RABBI FINGERS?

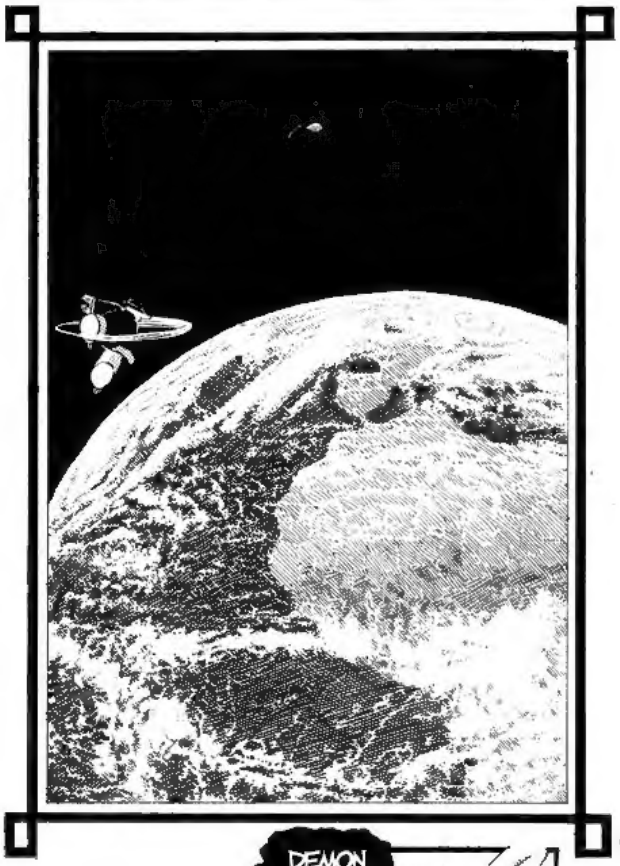
KABBI WILL GATHER UP ALL FOUR CORNERS OF THE NET...

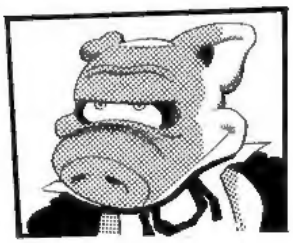


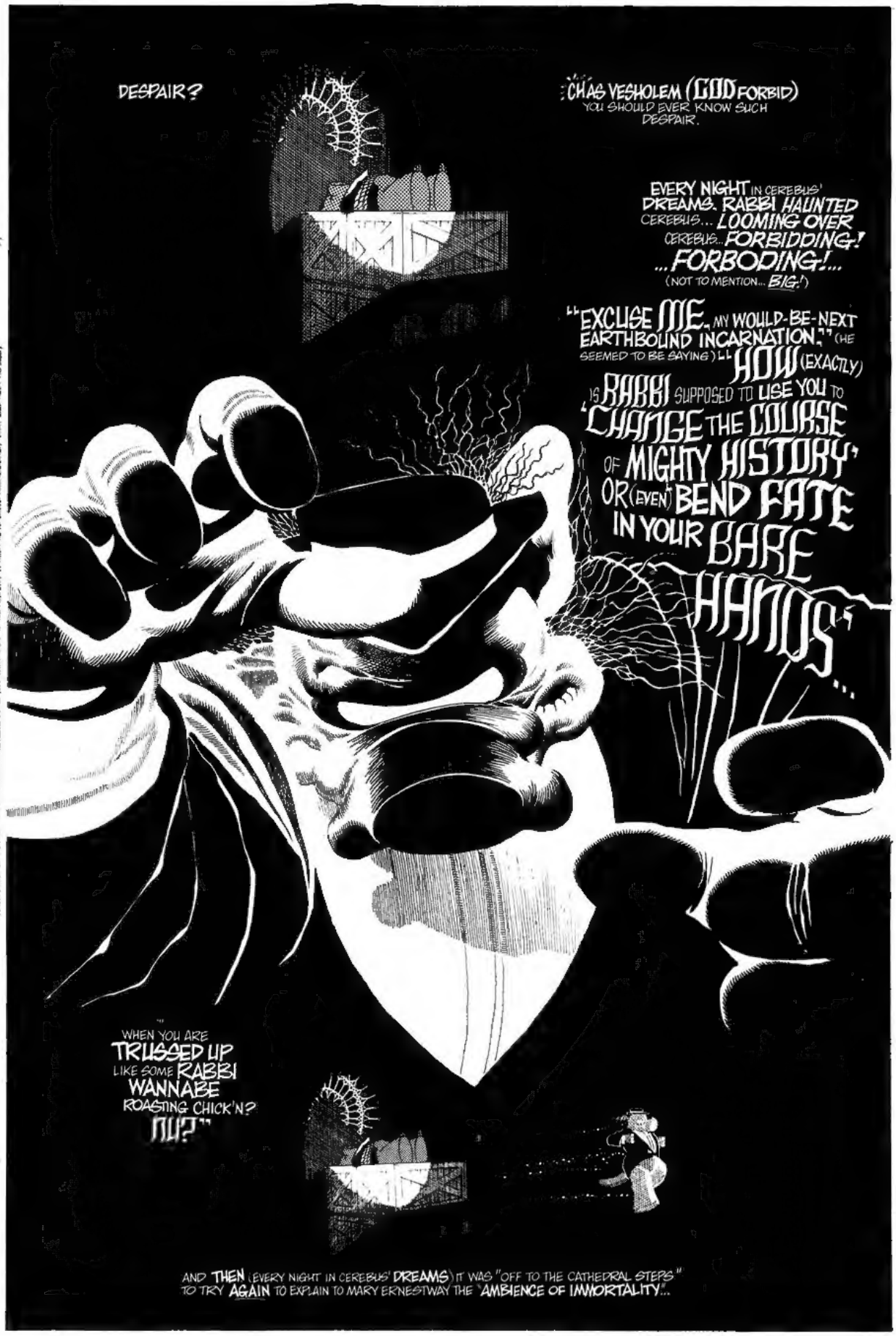
...FLY IT UP TO THE TOP OF EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE...

SWING IT AROUND...ONCE! TWICE! AND THEN? WITH ONE MIGHTY HEAVE OF HIS RABBI MUSCLES?

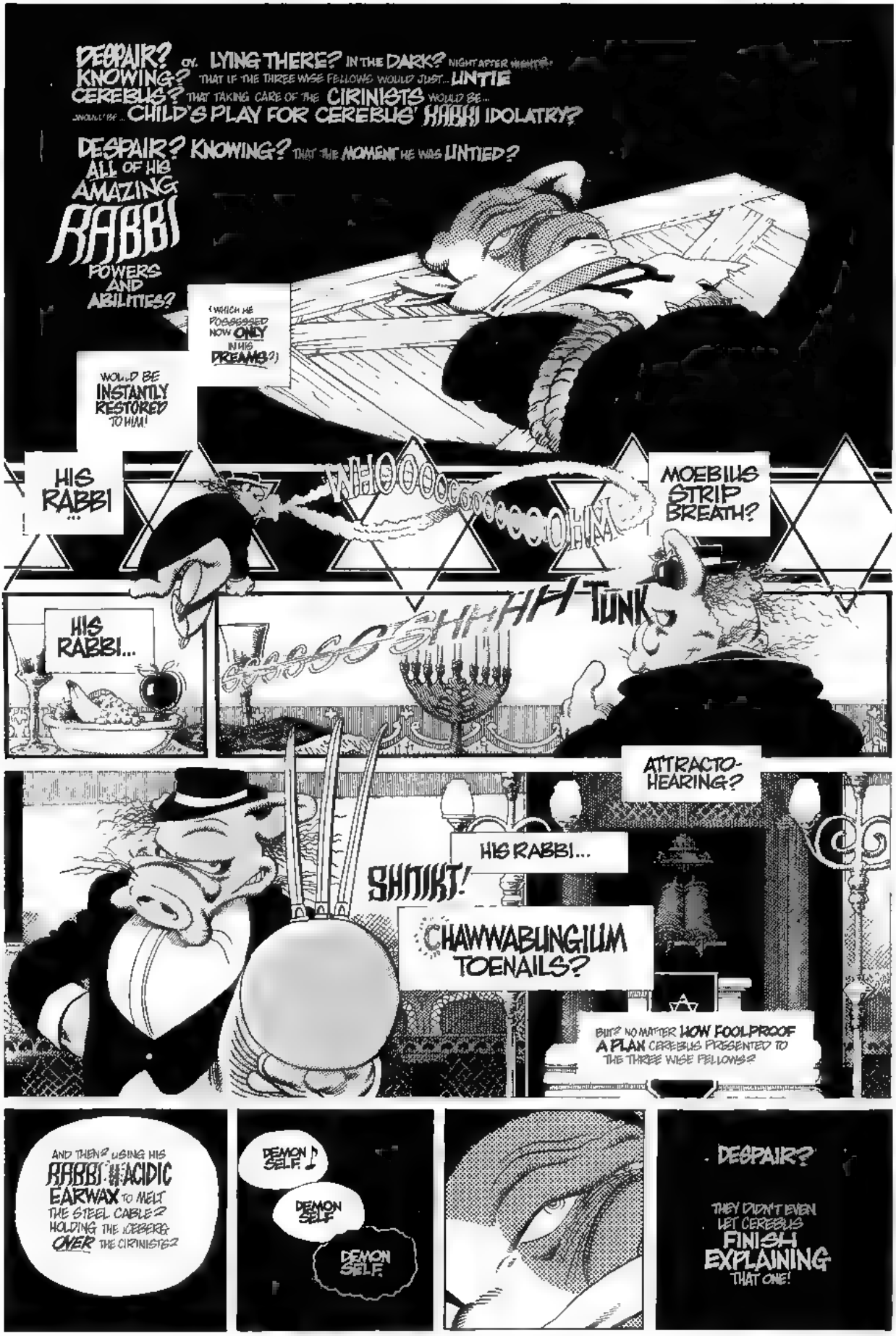
HURL THE WHOLE FARSHTINKENER BUNCH STRAIGHT OUT TO JUNO!






DESPAIR?
CHAS VESHOLEM (GOD FORBID) YOU SHOULD EVER KNOW SUCH DESPAIR.
EVERY NIGHT IN CEREBUS' DREAMS, RABBI HAUNTED CEREBUS... LOOMING OVER CEREBUS... FORBIDDING! ...FORBODING!... (NOT TO MENTION... BIG!)
"EXCUSE ME, MY WOULD-BE-NEXT EARTHBOUND INCARNATION," (HE SEEMED TO BE SAYING) "HOW (EXACTLY) IS RABBI SUPPOSED TO USE YOU TO 'CHANGE THE COURSE OF MIGHTY HISTORY' OR (EVEN) BEND FATE IN YOUR BARE HANDS"...
"WHEN YOU ARE TRUSSED UP LIKE SOME RABBI WANNABE ROASTING CHICK'N? HUH?"
AND THEN (EVERY NIGHT IN CEREBUS' DREAMS) IT WAS "OFF TO THE CATHEDRAL STEPS" TO TRY AGAIN TO EXPLAIN TO MARY ERNESTWAY THE "AMBIENCE OF IMMORTALITY"...

IMMORTALITY?
IMMORTALITY IS LIKE A NICE PIECE CH'ALLEH: PERFECT SYMMETRICAL BRAIDS. PERFECT CRUST NOT TOO NOT TOO LIGHT. CRISPY. AND INSIDE? EVER SO
WHILE SHE TRIED TO
kaKYM
BLOW CEREBUS' HEAD OFF!
FORTUNATELY? ALWAYS? NOW? (IN HIS DREAMS?) CEREBUS WAS IN HIS RABBI IDOLATRY! SO!
KAPWEENG!
EVEN WHEN SHE (BY CHANCE) HIT CEREBUS? IT WAS NO MORE THAN A... MINOR ANNOYANCE... LIKE A... A...
A ZEBUB IN CEREBUS' EAR.
KAPWEENG!
OF COURSE, BY THAT POINT WHAT CEREBUS WANTED TO SAY TO MARY ERNESTWAY WAS "IMMORTALITY YOU WANT? HERE! YOU HAVE CEREBUS' WARTS! YOU HAVE CEREBUS' PAYESS FOR A SHEITL! YOU HAVE CEREBUS' MORNING COAT! YOU HAVE CEREBUS' (YOU SHOULD EXCUSE THE FIRST SYLLABLE) PORKPIE HAT!""
KAPWEENG!
kaKYM
BUT...THEN... THAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A FARBISSNER CEREBUS AND A BALBATISHER RABBI!
(AS CEREBUS IS SURE YOU WILL AGREE)


DESPAIR? OY. LYING THERE? IN THE DARK? NIGHT AFTER NIGHT?
KNOWING? THAT IF THE THREE WISE FELLOWS WOULD JUST... UNTIE
CEREBUS? THAT TAKING CARE OF THE CIRINISTS WOULD BE...
...WOULD BE... CHILD'S PLAY FOR CEREBUS' RABBI IDOLATRY?
DESPAIR? KNOWING? THAT THE MOMENT HE WAS UNTIED?
ALL OF HIS AMAZING RABBI POWERS AND ABILITIES?
(WHICH HE POSSESSED NOW ONLY IN HIS DREAMS?)
WOULD BE INSTANTLY RESTORED TO HIM!
HIS RABBI...
WHOOO

AND THEN! JUST LIKE THAT! CEREBUS HAD IT! THE FOOLPROOF PLAN TO GET THE THREE WISE FELLOWS TO UNTIE CEREBUS! .... (GOSH).

ONE DAY (WHEN IT WAS KOSHIE'S TURN TO RECITE THE BOOK OF RICK) KOSHIE SUDDENLY DEVELOPED A CASE OF THE HICCUPS! (GASP).....

WELL! FOR THE BETTER PART OF THE MORNING MOSHIE AND LOSHIE HAD LISTENED TO KOSHIE STRUGGLE HIS WAY THROUGH THE FIRST CHAPTER . (GAD)...

"AN' DAT'" ♪ HIC! "AN' DAT'" ♪ HIC! "AN'_DAT'_FOIST" ♪ HIC! "AN'_DAT'_FOIST" ♪ HIC! "FOIST'_MOANEEN" HIC!

...WHEN THEY REALIZED THAT THEY COULD GO OFF TO ONE OF THE HUNTING LODGES WITH THEIR WIVES AND HAVE A NICE FOUR-OR FIVE-DAY VACATION AND STILL MAKE IT BACK BEFORE KOSHIE FINISHED HIS TURN (OR TURN) WHICH (UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES) --

"MOANEEN" ♪ HIC! "MOANEEN" ♪ HIC! "MOANEEN" ♪

WAS A DARN GOOD PLAN!

(AND THEN - SEEING MOSHIE AND LOSHIE IN THEIR HUNTING OUTFITS WAS WHAT GAVE CEREBUS A DARN GOOD PLAN OF HIS OWN!

OR, RATHER, THE GERM OF A PARN GOOD PLAN WHICH CEREBUS HAD NEARLY FIVE DAYS...

"...DA..... ...WOID..."

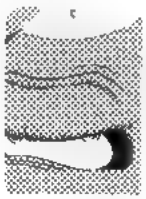
HIC

"...DA... ...WOID... ...SHALL..."

HIC

"...SHALL... ...RETOYN..."

HIC



"...SHALL... ...RETOYN... ...UN..."

HIC

"...UN..."

HIC

"...UNTO THEE ONCET..."

HIC

"ONCET MORE."

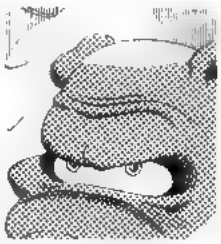
"A"

HIC

"A"

HIC

"A"



SLIMEK

"AMEN."

"AMEN."

"AMEN."

...TO TURN INTO A FOOLPROOF PLAN.

LISTEN. LUMBURGER. PERMITTETH MOSHER TO ASKETH THE QUESTION.

O:

O:

HIC

O:

HIC

SHLEP

SHLEP

SHLEP

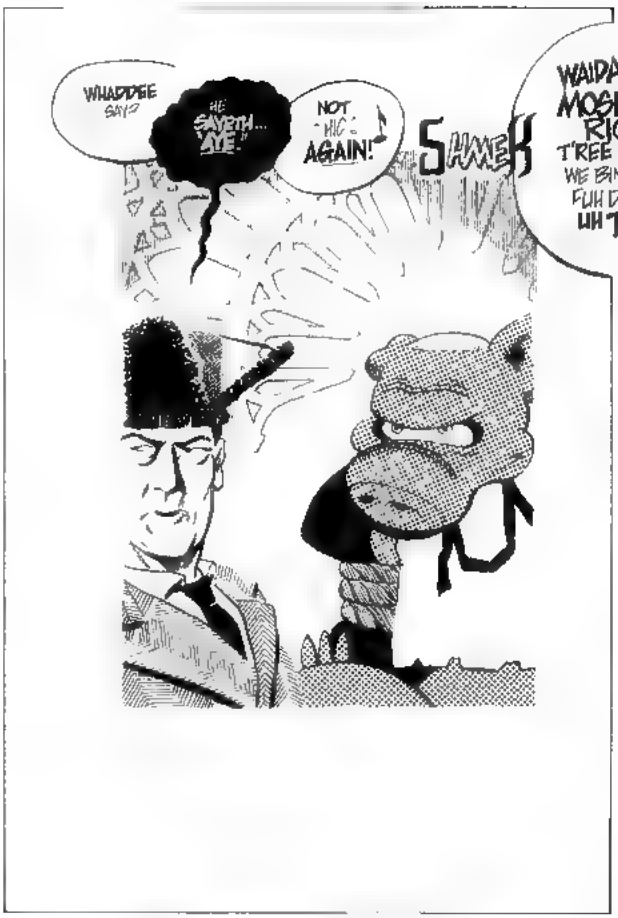
SHLEP

SLIMEK

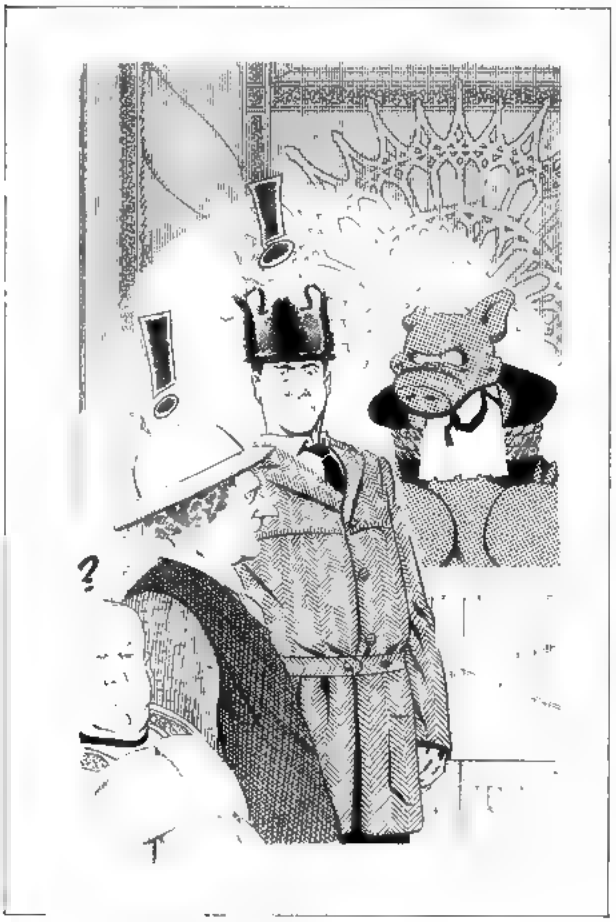
OKAY!

"WILT THOU NOW SPEAK UNTO THY SERVANTS THE WORD OF TRUTH WHICH WAS PROMISED US OF THE PROPHET RICK?"

AYE.


WHADDGE SAY?
HE SAYETH... "AYE."
HIC
NOT AGAIN!
SLAMEK
WAIDAMINNIT, MOSH! KOSHIE'S RIGHT! T'REE YEARS WE BIN WAITIN' FUH DA WOID UH TRUTH

HITTIN' OUR MARKS AN' DOIN' OWAH BEST "DEY WUZ ASTONIED AT 'IZ DOCTRINE' POSES
AN' EVERY DARN TIME
HOW MANY HUNTING LODGES ARE THERE?

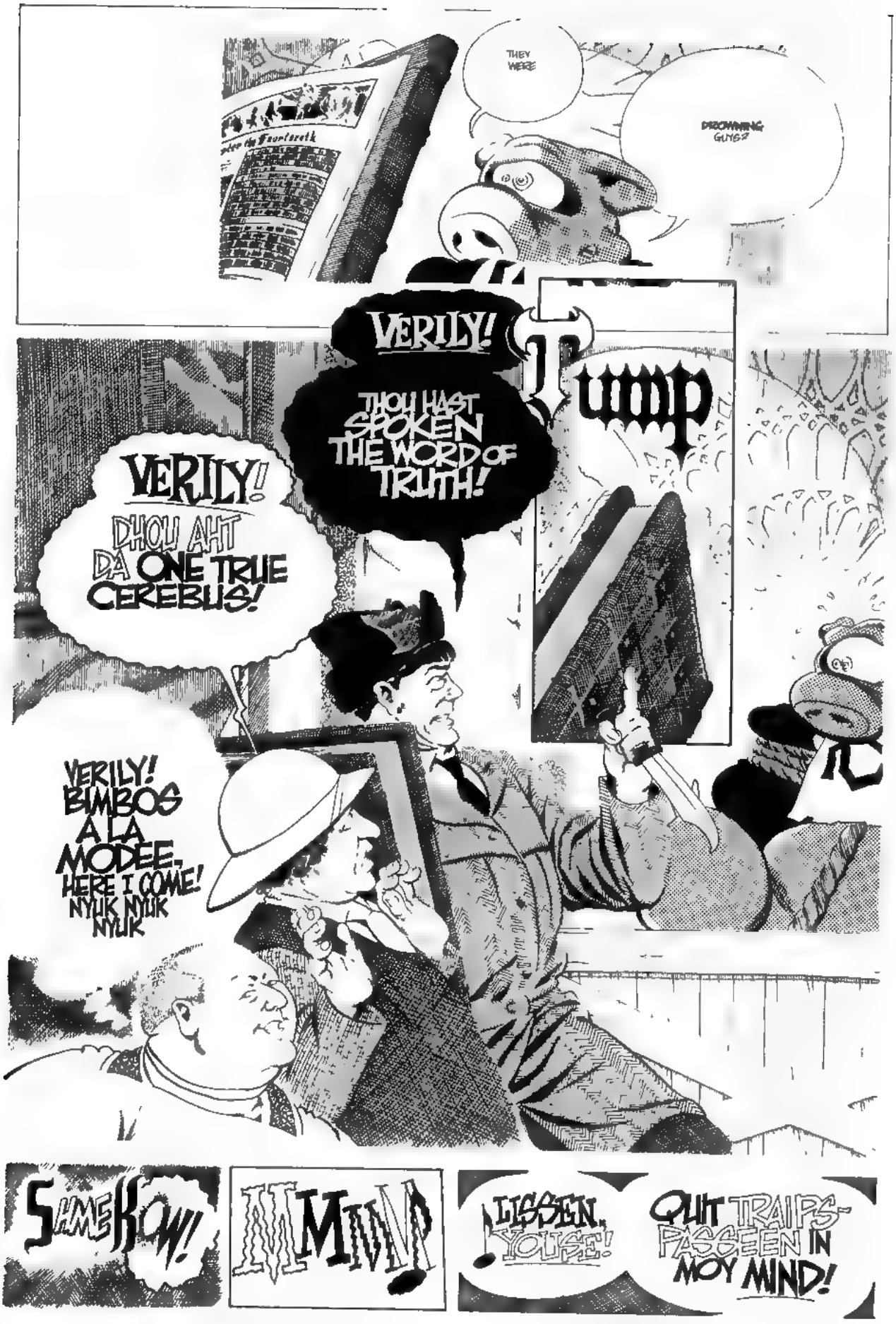

?

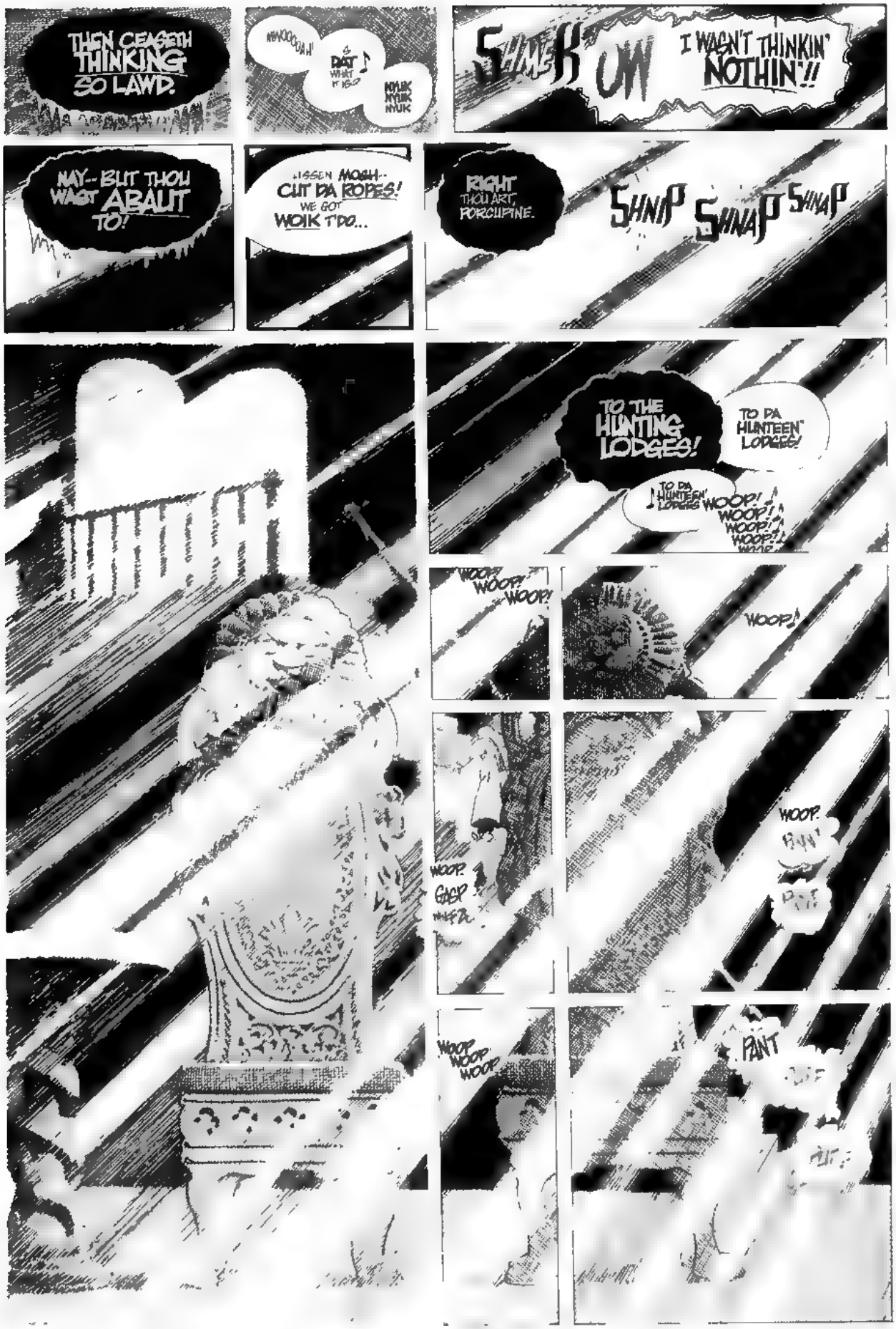
HUNDREDS!
THOUSANDS!
HIC
DOZENS?

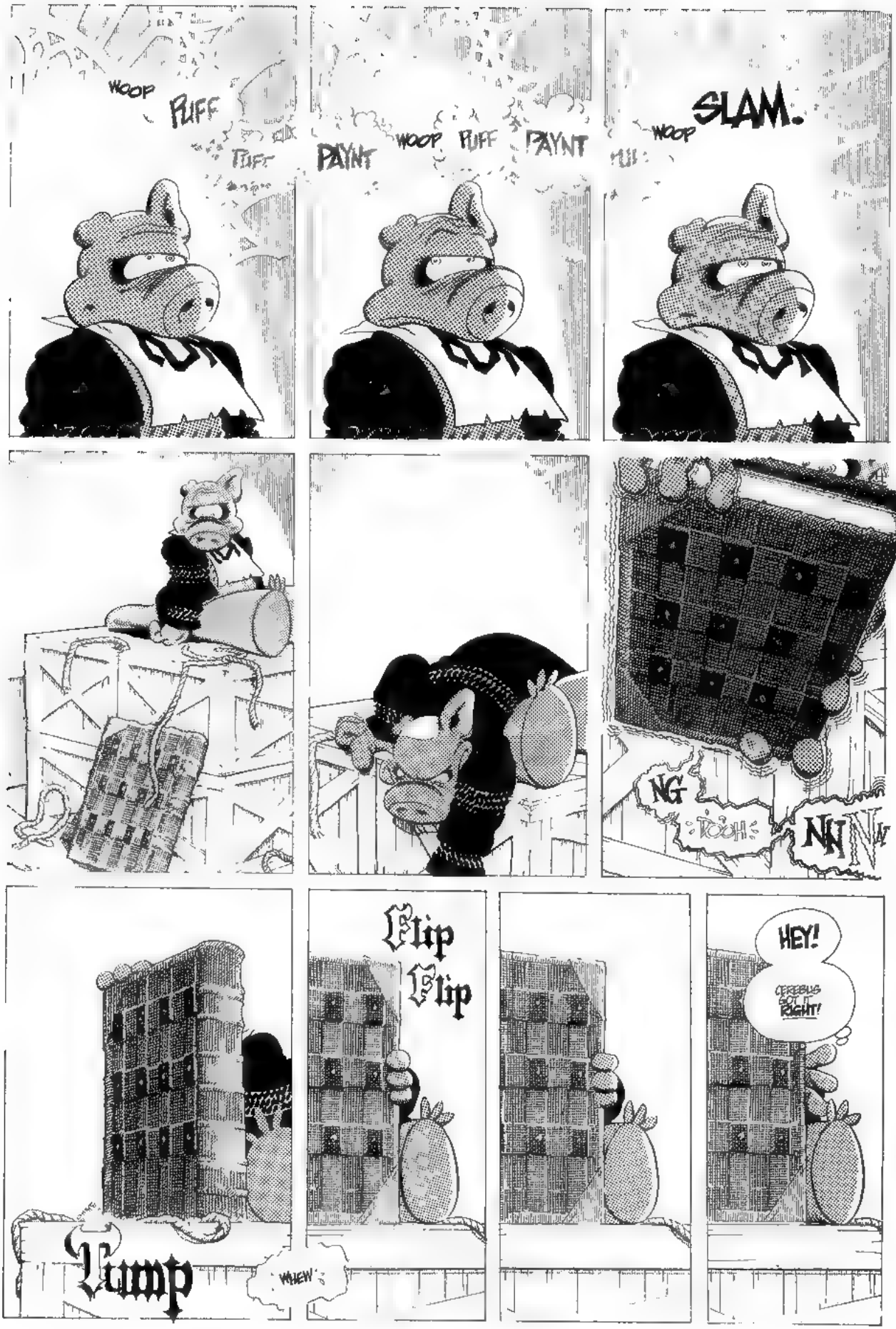
CERBERUS QUICKLY OUTLINED HIS FOOLPROOF PLAN: GET ALL OF CERBERUS' HARDCORE FOLLOWERS TO CIRCLE INTO HUNTING LODGES AND HAVE ALL OF THEM SMALL, TARGETED STOCKS TO GO ON HUNTING-TRIPS. HAVE THEM RENDEZVOUS IN THE MIDDLE OF A BIG OPEN FIELD AT LEAST A HUNDRED YARDS FROM ANYTHING — TREES, BOULDERS, ROCKS — THAT COULD BE USED FOR 'COVER'
SINCE IT'S AGAINST CHRIST'S LAW FOR ANY GROUP TO CONSIST OF LESS-THAN-HALF WOMEN THAT WILL BRING THE CHRIST ENFORCERS TO HUMANRIGHTS AND BREAK THINGS UP, ALL CERBERUS' FOLLOWERS HAVE TO DO IS STAY PUT AND SHOOT EVERY CHRIST BEFORE SHE CAN GET WITHIN CROSSBOW RANGE!
"BUT," (LOUISE WANTED TO KNOW), "WHAT HAPPENS IF THE CHRISTS USE GUNS AGAINST US?"
"THAT" (SAID CERBERUS) "IS THE FOOLPROOF PART!"
SINCE EVEN THE BEST WOMAN SHOOTER IS BARELY GOING TO BE AS GOOD AS A BELOW AVERAGE MAN, THERE'S NO WAY THE CHRISTS CAN GET WITHIN RIFLE RANGE THEY CAN HIT US WITHOUT FIRST GETTING SHOT THEMSELVES!
THE IMPORTANT THING IS TO PICK A SPOT WITH NO 'COVER' WITHIN THE SHOOTING RANGE OF THE AVERAGE MAN
THE PLAINS OF SARAH!
THAT'S JUST WHAT MOSLEZ WERE SAYING, YOU KNOW!
YOOZEEN GUNS! HIC AGAINS' MUDDERS?
...BUT HIC BUT HIC
DARS DYBBUK- HIC OLICAL!
MOSLEZ IS RIGHT. IT'S... IT'S A HOYNOUS PLAN
WHY... IT-- IT VOYEITH ON THE MEPHISTOPHILEAN.

BUT!
IS IT THE WORD OF TRUTH?
BOY! IF IT AIN'T I DON'T KNOW HOO-WHAT IS!!
NYUK NYUK NYUK
SHOOAH SOUNDS LOIK IT T'ME.
PERMITTETH MOSHER TO MAKETH IT ANONYMOUS AND...
...TO UNBIND THE ONE CEREBUS!
WAIT, MOSH! ACCOADING TO RICK THOYTEEN: FOAHTEEN, HE'S SUPPOSED TO UNBIND HIMSELF!
IZZAT SO?
THOU "JOT-AND-TITTLE" LEGALIST! ...DOEST THOU BELIEVE ALSO IN "SALVATION BY WORKS?"
?
ACTUALLY I DO. YEAH
AND DOEST THOU BELIEVE THAT THIS IS LIKE UNTO A HARD FIST!
GULP YEAH
AND DOEST THOU BELIEVE THAT THY SINLESS ART PROTECTED BY SOFT CARTILAGE?
UHHH...
WELL?
UNBOIND DA ONE CEREBUS!
PERMITTETH MOSHER TO CONGRATULATE THEE ON THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THY NEWFOUND STATE OF ENLIGHTENMENT.
WAIT!! MOSHIE!!
NOW WHO SEEKEST AFTER A FACEFUL OF MOSHER'S ETERNAL VERMES?

YOOAH F'GETTIN' APTER-CHAY HIC OURTEEN-FAY
DA "EYE-NAL-FAY WESCHUN-KAY"
CH...APTER... HICK...F...OUR-TEEN
...DUH... F...EYE...NAL... K...WES...
RIGHT THOU ART, DOLOMITE DOME!
THE BOOK!
DA BOOK!
DA BOOK!
.... CHUN
TWITCH
DA BOOK!
DA BOOK!
SHMEK
OW! I HIC SAID "BOOK".
AYE, BUT THOU WAST THINKING "BOOKEE"
Flip. Flip.
MOIND! HIC READUH.
AHEM ahem.
"WHAT ACT DIDST THOU SEE THE DISCIPLES OF RICK PERFAHMING IN THE FELDWAR WILDERNESS...
...AFTER THAT RICK APPEARED UNTO THEE IN THE SPIRIT SAYING, COME AND SEE."


THEY WERE
DROWNING GUYS?
VERILY!
THOU HAST SPOKEN THE WORD OF TRUTH!
Tump
VERILY!
DHOU AHT DA ONE TRUE CEREBUS!
VERILY! BIMBOS A LA MODEE. HERE I COME! NYUK NYUK NYUK
SLIME KOW!
MMMP!
LISSEN, YOUSE!
QUIT TRAIPS-PASSEEN IN MOY MIND!


THEN CEASETH THINKING SO LAWD.
WHOOOOAH!
DAT WHAT IT IS!
NYUK NYUK NYUK
SHHH OW
I WASN'T THINKIN' NOTHIN'!!
NAY-- BUT THOU WAST ABAUT TO!
..ISSEN MOSH-- CUT DA ROPES! WE GOT WOIK T'DO...
RIGHT THOU ART, PORCUPINE.
SHNAP SHNAP SHNAP
TO THE HUNTING LODGES!
TO DA HUNTEEN' LODGES!
TO DA HUNTEEN' LODGES!
WOOP! WOOP! WOOP! WOOP!
WOOP! WOOP! WOOP!
WOOP!
WOOP! GASP WHEEZE
WOOP.
PANT
WOOP WOOP WOOP
PANT


WOOP
PUFF
PUFF
PAYNT
WOOP
PUFF
PAYNT
WOOP
SLAM.
NG
NN
Flip
Flip
Tump
WHEW
HEY!
CEREBUS GOT RIGHT!

Chapter the Fourteenth

1 Ricke appears vnto Cerebvs 3 Ricke taketh vp Cerebvs 4 The baptizing of the disciples 5 The signe of the latter daies. 6 Cerebvs returnes to hes place 8 Inquiring of Cerebvs 11 The One True Cerebvs

THe Prophet Ricke fulfilling the promise hee had made in the sanctvarie appeared vnto Cerebvs in the spirit speaking vnto Cerebvs and saying:

2· The waters abound with the new and faithful but as yet the fishers are few. Come and see.

3·Then Ricke taketh up Cerebvs in the spirit and setteth him upon the waters and, lo

4·Cerebvs beheld Ricke in the Feldwar wilderness baptizing disciples in the Name of the One God (howsobeit Ricke himselfe baptized not but his disciples:)

5·And Cerebvs marueiled and perceiued not what hee saw (that it might be a signe in the latter daies vnto him).

6·And Cerebvs returned vnto his place after hauing bene shown that baptism which Rick's disciples perfourmed in the Feldwar wildernesse.

7· And this shalbe the signe in the latter daies: that thou Wise Fellowes shalt conceal from Cerebvs this final chapter in this booke.

8· And when it seemeth vnto thee, thou Wise Fellowes, that Cerebvs hath spoken vnto thee that worde of truth which shalbe to all men and in the which all men shall be commaunded then shalt thou inquire of Cerebvs speaking vnto him and saying:

9·What acte didst thou see the disciples of Ricke perfourming in the Feldwar wildernesse after that Ricke appeared vnto thee in the spirit saying Come and see. And if Cerebvs doth answer vnto thee

10· Drowning guys.

11· Then of a surety is hee the One True Cerebvs and of a surety is his worde the worde of truth. Vnbind him and follow him in all that hee commaundeth thee that thy daies may bee long vpon the earth and that all might bee fulfilled which hath been spoken of in this booke by the Prophet Ricke. Amen.

ple like the President of the Cambridge Union cannot grasp this is easily the scariest thing about them.

It may seem perverse to quote a woman in this context, but the point is particularly well-made by Fran Lebowitz in her 1982 book *Social Studies*. Lebowitz is talking about anti-smoking fanatics, and says:

> *"I myself find many – even most – things objectionable. Being offended is the natural consequence of leaving one's home. I do not like after-shave lotion, adults who roller-skate, children who speak French, or anyone who is unduly tan. I do not, however, go around enacting legislation and putting up signs In private, I avoid such people; in public they have the run of the place. I stay at home as much as possible, and so should they. When it is necessary, however, to go out of the house, they must be prepared, as am I, to deal with the unpleasant personal opinions of others, That is what 'public' means. If you can't stand the heat, get back in the kitchen."*

I'm enjoying *Cerebus* a great deal at the moment, both for the rapidly-accelerating storyline and the text pieces at the back. Good luck with the final three years of this impressive project, and please try not to fall under a bus before March 2004.

All the best.
Paul Slade

I'm feeling rather prescient these days, Paul. Mark Steyn's column in the National Post *("Animal husbandry of a different nature") having, for me, validated much of what I was saying in "Tangent":*

"In Maine, a fellow called Frank Buble, 71, was recently sentenced to eight years for trying to crowbar his son Phillip to death Frank shares a house with Phillip and his, er, partner Lady, a short-legged mixed breed bitch, and he claims he was driven to attack his son because he was tired of seeing him 'getting it on' with the dog and could no longer tolerate Phillip's 'lifestyle'."

Phillip wrote to Justice Andrew Mead at the Piscataquis County Superior Court saying that he would be exercising his right to speak at the sentencing and wanted Lady to hear what he had to say (!).

"I'd like my significant other to attend by my side if possible as she was present in the house during the attack, though not an eyewitness to it, thank goodness. I've been informed that your personal permission is needed given that my wife (!) is not human, being a dog of about 36 pounds weight and very well behaved."

The letter ended with his signature and a paw print, and underneath, the "signature" "Phillip and Lady Buble."

According to Phillip, he and Lady "live together as a married couple, In the eyes of God we are truly married."

If Maine passes an anti-bestiality law, says Phillip, "it will be a disservice to zoo couples..."

(That, evidently, is the approved, politically-correct term for it. "Zoo couples " Bestiality having been deemed to have unwelcome "negative connotations".)

"...and would keep zoo couples from coming out of the closet and drive us deeper underground. This helps no one and would force me out of state."

Peter Singer, Princeton's Professor of Ethics (!) believes we should be allowed to kill infants because they're not "morally equivalent" to fully-fledged persons. By contrast, animals are all proper persons, and only what he calls our "speciesism" prevents us from seeing it. Therefore we should test pharmaceuticals on disabled children and comatose adults.

"In fact, the newly elected Republican legislature in Vermont made an artful effort the other week to revise the state's 'civil unions' law by extending it not just to gays but to grandmothers living with unmarried kids, two maiden aunts sharing a house or any other consensual arrangement. Faced with an opportunity to 'celebrate diversity' in all its infinite variety, the Democrats went berserk. Such a move, they insisted..."

(This, to me, has to be one of the great 'punchlines' of all time:)

"...would be supremely insulting and degrading to homosexuals and lesbians "

Just wait (I thought to myself) until Maine passes its anti-bestiality statute and Phillip and Lady Buble move to Vermont and register their own "civil union."

I really appreciate your sending the tape (which I couldn't listen to—having recently disposed of my tape deck, CD player, television, VCR, turntable, tuner and amp) (talk about a great feeling of liberation!) and the letter with pertinent excerpts

As to the President of the Cambridge Union, I think this just reflects what most thinking people have suspected for some time (and another key element of "Tangent")—that Academe per se has been following a left-leaning course for some decades in our society, pre-dating the onset of feminism In fact, it has "leaned" so far to the left that whatever it was that it was leaning against *has long since collapsed and it has become a kind of refuge for neo-Stalinist and neo-Leninist thinking—or, rather, "thinking". In a democratic or (someday, I hope) Democratic society, progress is achieved through rigorous debate across the political spectrum. In Canada, the Liberals have a virtual stranglehold on power because they consistently appropriate any*

good idea put forward by the left (the New Democrats) or the right (the Conservatives, Reform / the Canadian Alliance). If this means that the left and the right are consistently denied the opportunity to feed at the trough of patronage and graft (as former Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, a conservative, put it, "There's no whore like an old whore") there is, at least, some forward momentum to society. The Liberals don't rule an idea unworkable or heretical just because the socialists or the neo-nazis came up with it. They are left-leaning, but open to any good suggestion

The extreme left, as exemplified by the President of the Cambridge Union, by feminists and by the "politically correct" by contrast are Idealogues. They are of the TV Show Survivor *school of thinking or, rather (again) "thinking" Their solution to any policy problem is to "vote people off the island" or to "put a bullet in them", or hang them from lamp posts, disenfranchise them, ignore them, humiliate them publicly. In short to a) get rid of them and/or b) silence them. They continue on this course until they have "voted" so many people "off the island " that they themselves become an ideologically straitjacketed minority and are, themselves, purged.*

I don't want to spend too much more time discussing the feminist-homosexualist axis (my attentions really have moved on to far more interesting areas of consideration and study), but I thought your letter worth printing inasmuch as it (quite usefully!) reflects our present feminist-generated societal malaise· that "just treading water" feeling which seems society-wide at this point and which (it seems to me) has been in place since society experienced the first signs of feminist infection some thirty years ago (exhilaration among the unthinking and emotion-based, non-specific "achy-ness," lethargy and apathy among the thinking and non-emotion-based). Undoubtedly, this is particularly true for those who are old enough to remember when society had some semblance of forward momentum to it, when there existed a society-wide sense of "swimming" as opposed to "just treading water". Alas, the feminist-homosexualist axis has had us all "just treading water" for so long that—for most of us—"swimming" (society as a thinking entity moving forward) now seems a mere vestigial genetic memory, like an amputee's "phantom limb". "Tell us another story of when people actually thought, Uncle Dave, and tell us about a time when not every single discussion could only proceed for two sentences before the speaker was accused of being sexist, or someone would yell 'but what about WOMEN?! Huh?! What about WOMEN?!'" You know, I'd love to, but to be honest, I barely remember those times myself. I was only fourteen when thinking was effectively outlawed. I'm forty-five now. My best advice is to get rid of your tape deck, CD player, television, VCR, turntable, tuner and amp (DVD player, computer, modem and whatever else our feminist-homosexualist society has foisted upon you) and read newspapers and books—particularly books written before 1970. You'll soon realize how sensible a place the world was and how sensible it could be again. But as long as you're watching television and watching movies and listening to music you're just going to exist in a state of free-floating anxiety verging on panic as you tread water in electronics hell You'll ask yourself while getting rid of all that junk (at least I did) "Am I INSANE getting rid of all these amazing advances in communications technology?" Four days later, you'll be thinking, "Was I INSANE owning all of that crap?" Of course, I doubt it will work for you if you're married or living with a significant other or if you have kids. Without a little box of coloured lights to stare into (or a couple of boxes of coloured lights if you own a computer) (or several boxes of coloured lights if you each have your own television and your own computer), I would imagine that most couples and "couples" would kill each other inside of a week. I might be wrong, but I doubt it.

Anyway, my "bottom line" for feminism: I believe that the vast majority of women would like things to go back to the way they were in the "olden days". A small, virtually insignificant minority of women (thirty years and older) want to be men, to be interchangeable with men and to scratch-and-claw and clamber their way upward, ever-upward in the cat-eat-dog "mean streets" of the concrete jungle until they break through the glass ceiling and never again have a bad hair day because they will have their own hairdresser and all of their female relatives will be green with envy and everyone has to pretend to like them or get fired and they can go on shopping binges that cost tens of thousands of dollars without batting a single eyelash implant (eyelash implants? Oooh How much do those cost?)—you know: the Oprah/Diana/Madonna/Hillary Rodham-Saxe-Coburg-Gotha trip All Must Bow (while telling everyone—from their semi-recumbent position of submission and docility—that she's still "just plain folks," completely unaffected by success and indescribable wealth and "just one of the girls")(if they want to keep getting invited to the parties, that is). I think the vast majority of women should be encouraged to do their part to make things go back to the way they were in the olden days and to make the small, virtually insignificant minority of middle-aged and older women recognize their aberrational (and rather unbecoming)

minority status. A challenge, to be sure, given that minority's blinkered and wilful (LA!LA!LA!LA!LA! I'M NOT LISTENING) (well-documented in your letter, Paul) resistance to debate and/or discussion of any kind. I do believe that tolerance should be the societal norm in dealing with that small, virtually insignificant minority of middle-aged and older women: that they should be allowed into whatever societal wrestling or boxing ring it is that has attracted their little gender-interchangeable hearts and that men should work very hard at smacking them around (metaphorically) in the same way all men who enter those rings get (metaphorically) smacked around. No allowances—none, zip, nada—should be made for gender (or race or anything else). If you can cut it by the rules of the dog-eat-dog (not cat-eat-dog) "mean streets" of the concrete jungle, you can stick around. If you can't cut it by the rules you can and should be bounced out of the ring—head-first—onto the hard and unforgiving pavement. Whoever you are. No "wrongful dismissal lawsuits". Be a man about it. Find another ring to climb into and fight harder next time. Those who can take it should be treated as men are in those environments: temporary allies never losing sight of the fact that they are competitors (in which consideration their gender should not be a factor). Admiration should be grudging, wary and kept to one's self unless admiration is perceived to be a tactical or strategic necessity—and certainly not as a sop to the emotion-based who misguidedly attempt to make love, friendship or affection a (completely unworkable) part of the dog-eat-dog world.

Women have to choose. You can't climb into the ring if you're six months pregnant and you can't bring your baby into the ring with you. If you want to be a man, be a man. That means no babies. You can't fight a hard and good fight in the ring and rear a child. To say that you can do both—effectively and efficiently—is to insult both ends of the spectrum of societal realities. It both

a) undervalues the societal contribution made by full-time mothers—who devote most (if not virtually all) of their time and attention to rearing their children—by perpetuating the misapprehension that child-rearing can be done on a part-time basis, as a kind of "career-woman hobby" to be indulged during off-hours, where and when it doesn't interfere with one's social life, one's explorations and indulgences of self, chatting with one's girlfriends on the phone, watching Oprah *and all the other pressing necessities of Today's Modern Woman. Feminists see child-rearing as no different from playing with dolls for a little while and then playing cowboys-and-Indians for a little while and holding the view that the child—like a doll—will be none-the-worse for the inattention when it comes time to play "mother" again. Along those same lines, Maternity Leave is (you'll pardon me for being even more direct than usual) bullshit. You saw the kid through to the age of two and now you'll hire strangers—or (if you have your way) get the government to hire strangers—to do the rest of your job? If child-rearing is, at best, a career woman's hobby, a part-time enterprise, then there is no reason to give motherhood or child-rearing any particular level of attention in our society—or, rather, no more attention than we, as a society, devote to building models or collecting stamps.*

b) undervalues work and the contribution made by full-time managers and employees in keeping the wheels of our society turning smoothly, generating the Gross National Product, keeping the stock markets flourishing, etc. etc. and perpetuates the misapprehension that one can intermittently pay attention to one's job while also minding the child in the playpen next to one's desk and do that job as effectively as someone who would be doing that job exclusively from early morning until quitting time. AND attempts to advance the misapprehension that both individuals should be compensated equally in terms of salary, benefits, vacation pay, etc. etc. (or, given time, would advance the view that the "child care employee" should be paid more since she is "productivity challenged" owing to her circumstance) As with all other feminist nonsense, child-care in the workplace is not open for discussion for the very good reason that even the most blinkered, the most wilful (LA! LA! LA! LA! I'M NOT LISTENING) Feminist recognizes—at whatever intellectual level to which they (invariably and collectively) turn their stone-deaf Feminist ears—is insupportable. It is not only insupportable intellectually, it is insupportable on the self-evident levels of the imbecilic: "two and two equals...? ...equals...? Come on, feminists. You can do it. Two and two equals...?"

Until the small, virtually insignificant minority of middle-aged and older women stop tyrannizing the vast majority of women who recognize these truths to be self-evident—who, while emotion-based and largely unthinking, FEEL (rightly, in my view) the inescapable certainty—that effective and thorough child-rearing is completely and wholly incompatible with having a career...

Until that time, as a society, we are just going to keep "treading water" and devoting a disproportionate amount of our societal energies and attentions to finding ever more convoluted ways to institutionalize newer and weirder and progressively less sensible laws which cater to the peculiar avarices of that increasingly insignificant minority of middle-aged and older women which has—and

*has always had—only its selfish interests at heart. And which has always—and, presumably, will always—expect society to cater to its every whim and whimsy at society's own expense. That is, until all of us who are capable of perceiving the self-evident realities of life find some way to communicate those self-evident realities to the blinkered and willful members opposite. Perhaps by holding up bold, hand-lettered signs: LA! LA! LA! LA! YOU CAN F**KING READ, THOUGH, CAN'T YOU?*

A few last thoughts on homosexuality and then (I promise) it's on to areas of genuine interest where the feminist-homosexualist axis is of minor and...tangential...concern.

****

Margaret Liss
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Hiya Dave,

You said in AC in *Cerebus #269* that a person doesn't like being perceived being something one is not. This was in reference to straight men being called a (latent) homosexual when one is not. Dave, I agree with you one hundred percent. This also irks me. Almost every day people assume I'm something I'm not. I try not to let it bother me (usually it doesn't), but it gets to a point sometimes that I just have to say something. "I'm not looking for Mr. Right. Is his sister cute?" usually is enough of a clue for them.

I can understand why some gays feel the need to parade around (though you won't catch me dressing in leather with my ass hanging out riding a motorcycle with a haircut that would make any Marine proud)—it is the same reason that a straight man doesn't like being call gay. I don't like being called straight. Nothing wrong with being straight, but it isn't me. I dislike being perceived as something I'm not. So maybe that is why some gays parade around all dressed up? I don't know. I have never marched in a gay pride parade. I don't see them doing much to build a relationship with straight people as I see them as a way for gay people to feel comfortable with who they are. If you need a parade for that, whatever. I know I don't.

As for the issue of dating. I don't think gays have to "err WELL on the side of caution when it comes to 'hitting on' anyone." If a guy feels he can come up to me and ask me out, I should be able to go up to any unattached woman and ask her out. If I know she is straight or already with someone, I won't ask her. Just like the gay males you know in the comic-book field didn't come on to you when they've talked to you: they know you are straight, so they don't ask you out. Common courtesy.

I don't think I am encroaching on the rights of a woman by asking her out. All she has to tell me is no, or I'm in a relationship, or I'm straight and I won't ask her out again. If you say I am encroaching on her right to be perceived as what she really is, as the guys that ask me out are doing to me, how do I know unless I ask her (or find out from other people, which is what I try to do before I ask anyone out)? The straight guy doesn't know I'm a lesbian until he asks me out and I tell him. Sure it bugs me a little, but I'm flattered that he thought me cute enough to ask me out.

What is wrong is the repetitive asking out of said person after that person makes it clear they aren't interested. It is all about manners. I have no problem with a guy coming up to me and asking me out, it only takes a few seconds to explain to him I'd rather date the cute girl over there. Now if the guy repeatedly asks me out or makes remarks such as I haven't found the right man yet or would I be interested in hooking up with his ex-girlfriend and him, etc. that is when I get upset. Just as the gay guy shouldn't bug the other guy once he makes it clear that he is straight, straight men should stop hitting on me once I tell them I'm gay.

So it is a common courtesy that should be extended by both straights and gays—once the person has made it clear that they are either already in a relationship or of the wrong orientation, then the person in question should not be asked out again. Most people do have that simple common courtesy I've found out, whether they are straight or gay.

As for going to the local queer club to find others like myself. Queer clubs are pretty much like any other club. Belch. I don't see how anyone can pick up anyone in a club (or bar) and expect it to be a lasting relationship. If I go to a club, I'm going to go with friends just to have a fun time dancing and drinking not to pick up someone. So I find others like myself the way most people find someone who is compatible for them—it just happens: on the bus, at work, at school, etc.

And gay-dar. What a load of crap that is. Please. I don't think I give off some funky gay vibe that other gays pick up on. I'm just a person. I don't have that special gay vibe power. I think gay-dar is based on stereotypes of what it is to be gay, which is a piss poor way of telling if someone is gay or not. Not all lesbians dress like diesel dykes. See the enclosed pic for yourself. Which one is the straight sister, which one is the sapphic sister?

Oh, I guess I should say something 'bout the little gray guy. I've been enjoying the series overall,

and the recent Latter Days with the three stoog... ah, three wise fellows. I laughed out loud a few times (okay, okay, more than a few times) with issue #269—holy hindquarters, indeedy. Keep up the good work—and tell Gerhard that his backgrounds are great (as usual)!

Take care,
Margaret

PS — Before I shove this in an envelope, I just want to say while I don't agree with everything you have to say Dave, I do admire you for speaking up for what you believe in. So please feel free to print my address if you'd like. Take care, Dave.

It's a little different on the masculine end of things. I can't think of any guy who would be flattered to be hit on by a gay. I mean, even a little teensy weensy bit. It would imply a level of (no other word for it) effeminacy being evident in the guy being hit on. Effeminacy and a kind of impotence ("wasn't he even a bit afraid that I was going to punch his lights out?"). Since that isn't an issue on the female side of things, I think it's a lot easier for a lesbian being hit on by a guy or a straight chick being hit on by a lesbian to take it as a strange (albeit somewhat irritating) compliment. But, I definitely agree with you about the vulgarity involved in straight guys continuing to hit on you, making inappropriate comments or suggestions. Way, way, way out of line in my view. But...

What a great letter. Thank you, Margaret. Have your girlfriend give you a great big sloppy kiss and tell you it's from me.

****

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Sorry if this seems like drivel or has a lot of mistakes, it was typed (on a computer) not written (on a piece of paper)

Hi Dave, just writing to tell you this: yes, the masses will catch up to you. Hell, before you know it (or maybe after you're dead), they'll even catch up to your "From Hell" dialogues. The revolution is coming. I don't care whether it's gonna be televised or digitalized but it is coming. If you haven't yet, I strongly urge you to read Grant Morrison's *The Invisibles*, it contains valuable information about the war going down inside our brains. Left side versus right side, Dave you ever considered how many french canadians are bilingual? Or the that the queen's jubilee happened a mere twenty years ago while the heads rolled in France some 200 years ago? America used to be french, but we gave it up when England beat France. Also, why did you stop at Ham? Where's Ti-Jean? Words like cool don't come from nowhere, they come from the beat generation. Jack Kerouack didn't know one word of english before he was five. Sorry if these thoughts seem disconnected but read *The Invisibles*, try to see history from a different viewpoint, realize that the future is in the multi-media (sorry, duh to myself, you are writing and drawing after all). Anyway like Tricky said: Revolution evolution love. Plus, here are the lyrics to one of my songs

Lost, lost there way,
beat beaten went astray
cell to sell buying there creation
money spent on intimidation

boom we're crashing
x xplain, explain this
won't tell you my real name
won't join in pointless games

one day we'll be strong enough to win this war,
we will, but until then we just stop trying
to figure some kind of clever name for our
generation, because I'm not like you and
you're not like me, and there's no such
thing as a generation.

there's no such thing as a generation
these labels are nothing but our creation
no easy targets if no direction
we name ourselves to restrict our actions

there's no such thing as a generation,
my friends I say we're stuck in this nation,
and when we get passed their alienation,
they tell us we're headed for grave deceptions,
they're out of hands our expectations,
this world is filled with self-destruction,
I'm not exposing some rare exception,
we're all here looking for opposition,
we find we're staring at our reflexion,
we don't know why but there's no connexion,
I can't relate with my generation,
I can't relate with communication,
I don't know what will be my salvation
and what the fuck is my generation,
there's no such thing as a generation.

Your letter seems to me to be very typical of your generation, Alexandre. Sorry. Obvious joke. Thanks for writing and good luck with your songwriting. Even without music it's pretty catchy.

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